

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. An image regulation apparatus that regulates an image,  
said image regulation apparatus comprising:

5       a transparency specification module that specifies a  
degree of transparency;

      a transparent range specification module that specifies  
an arbitrary range of an image as a transparent range; and

      a transparency setting module that, in response to  
10      specification of the transparent range, sets a new degree of  
transparency for an image in the transparent range, based on a  
current setting of transparency for the image in the transparent  
range and the degree of transparency specified by said  
transparency specification module.

15       2. An image regulation apparatus in accordance with claim  
1, wherein said transparency setting module selectively sets a  
lower degree of transparency between the specified degree of  
transparency and the current setting of transparency, as the new  
20      degree of transparency for the image in the transparent range.

      3. An image regulation apparatus in accordance with claim  
1, wherein said transparency setting module selectively sets a

higher degree of transparency between the specified degree of transparency and the current setting of transparency, as the new degree of transparency for the image in the transparent range.

5           4. An image regulation apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said transparency setting module comprises:

          a first transparency setting sub-module that selectively sets a lower degree of transparency between the specified degree of transparency and the current setting of transparency, as the  
10 new degree of transparency for the image in the transparent range;  
and

          a second transparency setting sub-module that selectively sets a higher degree of transparency between the specified degree of transparency and the current setting of transparency, as the  
15 new degree of transparency for the image in the transparent range,

          said image regulation apparatus further comprising:

          a selection module that selectively activates either of said first transparency setting sub-module and said second transparency setting sub-module.

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          5. An image regulation apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein the degree of transparency is set for each pixel.

6. An image regulation apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said transparency specification module is capable of specifying multiple stages of transparency in a range of 0 to 100%.

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7. An image regulation apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said transparent range specification module specifies two points to define the transparent range.

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8. An image regulation apparatus in accordance with claim 1, said image regulation apparatus being capable of regulate a layout of image areas in which images are displayed.

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9. An image regulation apparatus in accordance with claim 8, wherein one of the image areas is a frame image area, in which a frame image functioning as a frame of an arbitrary image is displayed.

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10. An image regulation method that regulates an image, said image regulation method comprising the steps of:

- (a) specifying a degree of transparency;
- (b) specifying an arbitrary range of an image as a transparent range; and

(c) in response to specification of the transparent range, setting a new degree of transparency for an image in the transparent range, based on a current setting of transparency for the image in the transparent range and the degree of  
5 transparency specified by said step (a).

11. An image regulation method in accordance with claim 10, wherein said step(c) selectively sets a lower degree of transparency between the specified degree of transparency and  
10 the current setting of transparency, as the new degree of transparency for the image in the transparent range.

12. An image regulation method in accordance with claim 10, wherein said step(c) selectively sets a higher degree of  
15 transparency between the specified degree of transparency and the current setting of transparency, as the new degree of transparency for the image in the transparent range.

13. An image regulation method in accordance with claim  
20 10, wherein said step(c) comprises the steps of:

(c1) selectively setting a lower degree of transparency between the specified degree of transparency and the current setting of transparency, as the new degree of transparency for

the image in the transparent range; and

(c2) selectively setting a higher degree of transparency between the specified degree of transparency and the current setting of transparency, as the new degree of transparency for the image in the transparent range,

said image regulation method further comprising the step of:

(d) prior to said step(c), selectively activating either of setting by said step(c1) and setting by said step(c2).

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14. An image regulation method in accordance with claim 10, wherein the degree of transparency is set for each pixel.

15. An image regulation method in accordance with claim 15 10, wherein said step(a) is capable of specifying multiple stages of transparency in a range of 0 to 100%.

16. An image regulation method in accordance with claim 10, wherein said step(a) specifies two points to define the transparent range.

17. A storage medium that stores therein a computer program used to regulate an image, said computer program comprising:

a module that, in response to specification of a degree of transparency and an arbitrary range of an image as a transparent range, sets a new degree of transparency for an image in the transparent range, based on a current setting of transparency  
5 for the image in the transparent range and the specified degree of transparency.